

Tijuana Estuary Issues Subcommittee

Biodiversity Along the Border Committee

Subcommittee Meeting Notes

January 30, 2007

Participants

Karen Bane – State Coastal Conservancy

Don Brubaker – USFWS

Manuel Colima – CONAGUA

Maeve Hanley – County of San Diego

Doug Liden – USEPA

Ricardo Martinez – CalEPA

Mike McCoy – Tijuana National Estuarine Research Reserve

Fred McLean – City of Imperial Beach City Council

Ann McEnany – International Community Foundation

Lauren McNees – California Biodiversity Council

Kevin O'Connor – City of San Diego

Clay Phillips* – CA Dept. of Parks & Rec / Tijuana National Estuarine Research Reserve

Bruce Posthumus – San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

Eric Reichard – USGS

Oscar Romo – CA Dept. of Parks & Rec / Tijuana National Estuarine Research Reserve

James Swanson – US Dept. of Homeland Security

Arturo Vazquez – SANDAG

*Subcommittee Chair

Meeting Highlights

The group reviewed the direction it was given from the California Biodiversity Council (CBC)'s Co-Chairs on September 28, 2006. Since that point, staff determined that the "Tijuana Estuary Issues" Subcommittee should be a merge of the subcommittees originally identified for Conservation Easements, Tijuana River Sediment Basins, Los Laureles Sewerage System, and Tires and Trash. It was understood that this subgroup would be responsible for making recommendations to the CBC regarding these issues.

The group decided that the end product should be the components of a grant proposal, (scope of work, deliverables, and cost) which will be shopped to the various CBC agencies, as well as other agencies and organizations as appropriate. Once specific grant opportunities are identified, the components as identified by this group will be used to prepare a formal grant proposal. The determination of what entity would prepare and submit a specific proposal(s) depends on specific grant opportunities.

Project 1. Sediment Basins & Conservation Easements

The sediment basin project and the conservation easement project could potentially be one combined project. Oscar Romo has done research on the feasibility of a sediment basin and/or conservation easement in the border region, and reported that he and staff from the IBWC have done preliminary studies of the border canyons and determined that Matadero/Smugglers Canyon is probably large enough to accommodate both a sediment basin and a conservation easement, the easement on the North side of the road to Ensenada, and basins to the South. Along the international border, Yogurt Canyon is collecting sediment, but more than was originally anticipated because there is more development than was originally anticipated. It is not collecting sediment in a manner by which it could be maintained as an engineered basin. There may be potential for this portion of Yogurt Canyon to accommodate an engineered sediment basin combined with a conservation easement. There may also be other opportunities for sediment basins within the Yogurt Canyon watershed, especially as integral parts of the extensive development that is currently underway. Los Laureles Canyon does not have room for a basin or an easement.

At this early stage in the planning process, the following tasks must be researched/completed before any more decisions/progress can be made:

1. Determine locations for basins on both sides of the border.
2. Determine the size available for the basins.
3. Quantify the sediment amount that will be captured.
4. Quantify the costs to secure the land, manage the basins, and periodically remove the sediment.
5. Identify who would be responsible for indefinite management of the basin (would not be covered by project or grant money). Identify sites to dispose of sediment (both sides of the border; Nelson's quarry was mentioned).
6. Work with the City of Tijuana to reduce sediment loads from Los Laurels, Los Salsas and Matadero Canyons.
7. Understand the science of sediment loads and transfer, which may require funding assistance to either summarize available data for the subcommittee or analyze the canyons that drain into the estuary to determine sediment loads and disposal.

Assignments:

1. Eric R. from USGS will find out if his agency can determine how to quantify sediment loads and transfer sediment to a disposal site. He will report on the

status of the Fate and Transport study being considered by USGS at the Tijuana Estuary that could open up the option of inexpensive sediment disposal in the surf zone.

2. Jim S. from Homeland Security will see if there is grant money available to pay for implementing and managing a sediment basin in northern Smugglers Gulch.
3. Maeve H. will determine the feasibility of using Nelson/Sloan quarry as a sediment disposal site.
4. Ricardo M. will contact the Integrated Waste Management Board to engage them in this discussion.
5. Ricardo M. and Oscar R. will contact CESPT (a State of Baja agency) and the City of Tijuana to determine jurisdiction over sediment basins in terms of ownership and maintenance.
6. Clay will talk to Jonathan from Senator Ducheny's office to secure legislative support and a commitment for continued involvement in the BATB.
7. Don B. from USFWS will identify possible sites for basins and easements with GIS data he has on land ownership, etc.

Future Work:

1. Prepare a scope of work, deliverables, and cost sheet to use as a template for future grant proposals.
2. Prepare proposals. Suggestions for possible granters include CBC members, Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Homeland Security, Border 2012, SCERP, Proposition 84, and perhaps the California Legislature.

Project 2. Community Condominial Sewage System

The CBC directed this subcommittee to develop a proposal to fund a condominial sewerage pilot project. This project could serve as a model for other areas within the City of Tijuana; resulting in better sanitation for Tijuana's communities and improved conditions at the Estuary.

The cost is estimated between \$20,000 and \$30,000 to hook up 50 households, which is the considered to be one sewerage "unit."

The project would be based on an existing successful project in Peru. The responsibility of this subcommittee is to find funds for the demonstration project.

USEPA, through Border 2012, funds many traditional sewage projects in Mexico, but only if they are in incorporated areas within the city. If these projects are not within incorporated areas, it will be difficult to find funding. Doug L. explained that the workgroup needs to become involved with the utility companies in Mexico that do this kind of work in cooperation with USEPA and Border 2012.

Assignments:

1. Oscar will prepare a report with the scope, budget, and deliverables for the implementation of the condominium sewerage pilot project.
2. All members of the subgroup need to help identify NGOs on both sides of the border to participate in this project.
3. Oscar and Doug will contact CESPT and with them they can determine whether this project should apply for Border 2012 funds or seek other funding.

Project 3. Tires and Trash

Clay explained that tires are a huge problem both in Mexico and in the estuary. In 2005 they removed 4,000 tires from the estuary. There is a lot of illegal movement of used tires from California to Mexico, because there is a huge market for used tires in Mexico. There is a need to educate people in Mexico about using other materials for retaining walls. They have tried recycling programs but have not been successful. There is also a need for responsibility from industry. When tire companies take tires off cars in California, they need to be responsible for where they go.

Assignments:

1. Clay will find out what tires can be recycled and what tires cannot be recycled.
2. Clay will also determine how much money the estuary spent removing 4,000 tires in 2005.
3. It was stated again that the Integrated Waste Management Board needs to be here and Ricardo will call them and make sure they are involved in the next meeting.
4. SWIA and SCC (Karen B) are working on trash as a separate issue from tires, but there was not sufficient time to discuss. We will ask them to report out at the next meeting.